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ABSTRACT

The goal theory of achievement motivation establishes that goals stressed by schools dramatically affect whether children develop a success orientation or give up when faced with failure. This paper examines how Australian children from diverse cultural backgrounds view achievement and success in the classroom. A questionnaire derived from the Inventory of School Motivation assessed students' perceived goals in four areas: task or mastery goals, ego or performance goals, social solidarity goals, and extrinsic goals. Using Likert-type ratings of these goals, students indicated what made them feel successful and what made other people successful at school. The questionnaire was administered to 1,173 Anglo Australian students, 496 Aboriginal students, and 487 students of immigrant background in grades 7-11 in 12 rural and urban high schools in New South Wales, Australia. Participants' perceptions of success for self at school were similar across the three groups. All groups agreed that excellence and task involvement were important personal indicators of success, although Western groups were significantly more positive than the Aboriginal group. All groups were unsure of the importance of achieving power, but the Aboriginal group was most negative. The two Western groups agreed that competitive school success indicated personal success, but the Aboriginal group disagreed. The three groups were uncertain of the importance of collectivist goals and agreed that teacher recognition and token reinforcement indicated success. Results suggest that schools foster individualist but not collectivist goals. Contains 38 references. (SV)

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Children's belief about success in the classroom: Are there cultural differences?

Paper presented at the annual meeting of the
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ABSTRACT

The goal theory of achievement motivation argues that the goals stressed by schools have dramatic consequences for whether children develop a success orientation or whether they avoid challenging tasks, giving up when faced with failure. Currently, little is known about how children from diverse cultural backgrounds within Australia view achievement and success in the classroom. Does being successful at school mean the same thing for all children? This study explores this issue by looking at four specific achievement goals: task goals, ego goals, social goals, and extrinsic goals. Using a Likert-type scale based on these four goals Aboriginal Australian, anglo Australian and migrant Australian students were asked to indicate what made them feel personally successful at school. They were then asked to indicate what made other people in general successful at school. In our paper we examine similarities and contrasts between the three groups. In particular, we explore stereotypical views on what motivates Aboriginal children in an attempt to explain the apparent lack of motivation and poorer performance and retention of these students within schools.

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INTRODUCTION

Goal theory emphasises purpose or intention as central to achievement behaviour in different achievement situations (Ames 1992). Achievement goals are cognitive representations of purpose grounded in beliefs, attributions, and affect that have consequences for cognition, affect, and behaviour (Ames & Archer, 1987, 1988; Dweck, 1986; Dweck & Elliot, 1983; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Elliot & Dweck 1988; Weiner 1986;). Considerable research effort is now focused on establishing the linkages between the classroom environment, goals, and motivational outcomes (Ames, 1992). Achievement goal theory holds that the explicit and implicit achievement goals emphasised by schools (through school curricula and evaluation procedures, parents, and teachers) influence the academic achievement orientation of students.

Mastery and performance goals represent different conceptions of success and reasons for approaching and engaging in academic tasks. A mastery goal orientation has been shown to be related to internal control beliefs reflected in meta cognitive knowledge, memory strategy used, and effort, and is self referenced (see, for example, Ames 1992; Blumenfeld 1992; Meece 1994; Pintrich, et al, 1993). For example students motivation for academic success can be seen in terms of their personal effort, self efficacy, and domain interest. In contrast a performance goal orientation has been shown to be related to internal goal beliefs reflected through external comparisons (see, for example, Ames, 1992; Blumenfeld, 1992; Meece, 1994; Pintrich et al, 1993). For example students' motivation for academic success can be seen in terms of their ability compared to others, or, compared to normative based standards. Students' reliance on performance goals may be problematic insofar as students failure to meet prescribed standards may result in the adoption of failure avoidance behaviour (see, for example, Covington, 1992 p70; Ames 1992). Students who adopt a mastery goal orientation are comparatively impervious to negative feedback (Ames 1992; Pintrich et al 1993; Harris & Covington, 1993).

Recent research suggests that mastery and performance goals are not mutually exclusive and that their salience may depend on student interest and value beliefs about academic tasks. Pintrich et al. (1993) suggest that interest and value beliefs are

important related constructs insofar as differential interest and value beliefs about academic tasks influence the adoption of mastery, performance, or both, goal orientations. Further, mastery and performance goal orientations may also vary in salience depending on the nature of the school environment and the broader social and educational contexts of the institution (Meece 1991; Pintrich & Garcia 1991; Wenzel 1991). Beyond this it has been suggested that students may hold other goals apart from mastery and performance, such as a desire to please one's parents, to be important in the peer group, or to preserve one's cultural identity. Each of these impact upon the quality of students' motivation in particular tasks in school settings (see, for example, Urdan and Maehr 1995 and McInerney, Roche, McInerney, & Marsh, 1997). Academic achievement outcomes then are affected by a complex array of motivational determinants related to these multiple goals (McInerney, 1996).

Triandis (1995) proposes that achievement motivation is influenced by two forces - Individualism and Collectivism. He writes that the defining attributes of Individualism and Collectivism are the nature of the self (autonomous versus interdependent), the structure of the goals (the priority given to personal or group goals), the value placed on self-needs versus norms and duties, and the emphasis on maintaining communal relationships versus exchange relationships. For example the influence of Individualism over Collectivism would result in individuals being more inclined to value independent action, the pursuit of personal success, self gratification over group action, or group welfare. Triandis (1995) stresses that these differences are of degree rather than kind.

Implicit in the educational research on mastery and performance goals is a Western conception of what are the appropriate goals of schooling. Such a conception has its focus on Individualism where priority is given to the goals of individuals. Blumenfeld (1992) highlights the need for more research about the effects of collectivist goals, such as social concern and affiliation, and how they interact with individual mastery and performance goals. She suggests that it is possible that social, mastery, and performance goal orientations may coexist without apparent detriment to strategy use or achievement. Further, a combination of goal orientations might be more productive than mastery goals alone due to feelings of belongingness and social responsibility providing added impetus for effort. Moreover she points out that goal

theory research has primarily emphasised individual perceptions and that less attention has been paid to whether these perceptions have been shared by others. This leads to two related questions: do academic achievement and success have the same meaning for students from different cultural backgrounds? and do goals differentially influence the direction of achievement motivation in different culturally groups? More particularly, do self perceptions of relevant goals for personal success vary across cultures or is there a common conception of what success means? If so, does this common conception reflect a salience for Western preconceptions of what school success means?

The literature posits a number of opposing values regarding goal seeking for children coming from Western societies and those coming from non-Western indigenous societies, such as Australian Aboriginal children. It is believed, for example, that individuals within Western societies are competitive, seek power and control over others and desire individual success through achieving personal goals. In contrast, it is believed that Aboriginal children are affiliation oriented and are motivated by cooperation and social concern. Group needs are considered more important than individual needs and therefore it is believed that Aboriginal people eschew competitiveness and individual striving for success. It is also believed that Aboriginal people are strongly present and past oriented while members of the Anglo community are future-time oriented. Consequently it is believed that Aboriginal children are more motivated by present rewards, such as token reinforcement, than individuals from modern Western societies (see, for example, Davies & McGlade, 1982; James, Chavez, Beauvis, Edwards, & Oetting, 1995; Ledlow, 1992; Sanders, 1987; Sommerlad & Bellingham, 1972; Watts, 1981).

Theory and research into relations between social solidarity and affiliation and academic achievement are well represented in the literature. Cooperation as a property of social solidarity and affiliation (see, for example Triandis, 1995; Covington, 1992) has been shown to be associated with effort, sharing ideas, and achievement (Ames, 1984). It has been argued that cooperation enhances students' self worth by de-emphasising ability differences (Ames, 1984) and that through this students experience support for contributing to the group effort, and have more opportunities for success (Harris and Covington, 1993). Despite this Harris & Covington (1993) in an

experimental study found that self-perceptions of self and others ability are more likely to be influenced by success or failure outcomes than they are by cooperative or competitive environments. That is success or failure had significant effects in magnifying or reducing the impact of individual performance differences irrespective of whether or not the environment was cooperative or competitive. A further aspect is that failure under either arrangement, elicits shame and humiliation (Harris & Covington, 1993; Covington, 1992.). Harris & Covington have proposed that the ensuing cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957) results in rationalisation as to the causes of shame and humiliation by attributing blame elsewhere. For example, students may rationalise that the subject is too hard or the teacher did not know the subject domain.

Triandis & Vassiliou (1967) have proposed a similar mechanism explaining negative self perceptions of a valued dimension of one's own culture resulting from inter-cultural contact. They write "...dissonance is reduced by improving the perception of one's own group on some 'other' dimension" (p327). It is well recognised in Australian schools that many indigenous minority Australian Aboriginals do not achieve academically as indicated by school retention, drop out rates and academic performance. It follows then that Aboriginal students, to reduce feelings of shame and humiliation, may tend to see themselves as different to immigrant and Anglo Australian students.

In this paper we focus on the meaning Aboriginal students give to school success compared to the meaning Anglo Australian and Migrant students give to school success. In particular, we examine whether Aboriginal students consider it relevant and appropriate to evaluate their personal school success in Individualist or Collectivist terms and whether Aboriginal students perceive success for others differently from how they preceive success for themselves.

The specific questions we address are:

1. How do *individuals* from particular cultural groups define *personal* school success?

2. How do *individuals* from particular cultural groups define *others'* school success?

3. What are the similarities and differences within and between groups in defining *individual* versus *other* groups' school success?

METHOD

Participants were administered a questionnaire derived from the Inventory of School Motivation (McInerney & Sinclair, 1991, 1992; McInerney & McInerney, 1996; McInerney, Roche, & McInerney 1995; McInerney, Roche, McInerney, & Marsh, 1997). In the two part questionnaire (see appendices 1 and 2) participants were asked first, to think about times when they personally felt successful at school (eg, "because you set out to beat someone in a test, and did") and, second, to indicate what qualities they thought other students need to have to be successful at school (eg, "they like to beat others at tests"). The questions in both cases related to the four perceived goals of behavior described above, each of which had two dimensions:

Task (or mastery) goals:

Task involvement and striving for excellence.

Ego (or performance) goals:

Competition and power/group leadership.

Social solidarity goals:

Affiliation and social concern.

Extrinsic goals: recognition and token rewards

(Maehr, 1984; Maehr & Braskamp, 1989).

There were 16 questions in part one of the questionnaire, "success for self" (two questions per dimension) and 22 questions in part two "success for others" (consisting of two questions per dimension and six questions relating to sense of self dimensions: Self reliance, self esteem and goal orientation). The response format was a three point scale showing level of agreement Yes (3) Not sure (2) and No (1). Mean score scales were derived from the two items per scale. Analyses consisted of item

analysis to determine trends in the data, multivariate analysis of variance, ANOVA, chi square tests and paired t-tests to consider differences between and within groups on answers to the two part questionnaire. As it was believed that sex may interact with cultural group in influencing the main effects, sex was included as a factor in the analyses. The categories of interest, therefore, were membership of a cultural group and sex.

The following hypotheses were used to guide the analyses.

Hypothesis 1. Anglo Australian and immigrant Australian children will evaluate personal "success for self" at school in terms individualist values: seeking for personal excellence, task orientation, competition and power, more than Aboriginal children.

Hypothesis 2. Aboriginal children will evaluate personal "success for self" at school in terms of collectivist values: affiliation and social concern, as well as teacher recognition and token reinforcement, more than the other two groups.

Hypothesis 3. Anglo Australian and immigrant Australian children will evaluate "success for others" at school in terms of the others' level of competitiveness, task orientation, seeking for excellence, power orientation, level of self reliance and goal direction more than Aboriginal children.

Hypothesis 4. Aboriginal children will evaluate "success for others" at school in terms of the others' level of social concern, affiliation, need for token reinforcement, need for recognition and high self esteem more than the other two groups.

Hypothesis 5. There will be no significant differences between the perception of "success for self" and "success for others" within each group.

Participants.

The participants were drawn from 12 high schools in New South Wales, Australia. Five schools were selected from educational regions within Sydney, and seven were drawn from rural regions. From these schools the following samples were drawn:

(a) All Aboriginal students from Grades 7,8,9,10, and 11 (n=496).

(b) Students of an immigrant background randomly chosen from Grades 7,8,9, and 11, and all students in Grade 10 (n=487);

(c) Anglo Australian students , equal numbers randomly chosen, from Grades 7,8,9, and 11, and all students in Grade 10 (n=1,173);

(d) There were approximately equal numbers of males and females across each group and across each grade;

RESULTS

Our major focus was on significant differences between cultural groups. However, as it was thought that sex and cultural group might interact, multivariate analyses of variance in a three by two factorial design (Aboriginal/Immigrant/Anglo by Male/Female) were conducted on the two instruments used, namely the "Success for self" and "Success for other" instruments. Tests of homogeneity of variance (Box's M) and independence of the variables (Barlett's test of sphericity) were conducted to confirm the suitability of the data for MANOVA.

The multivariate tests of significance indicated significant main effects for cultural group on both the instruments. Follow-up univariate F tests indicated significant main effects for culture on five of the eight "Success for self" variables and ten of the eleven "Success for others" variables. The multivariate tests of significance also indicated significant main effects for sex. Follow-up univariate F tests indicated significant main effects for sex on three "Success for self" variables (competition, social concern, and power), and two "Success for other" variables (competition and power). There were no significant interaction effects of cultural group by sex on either of the "Success for self" or "Success for other" questionnaires. Consequently our analysis of the results only deals with the cultural group main effects.

Paired t-tests were conducted to ascertain differences within groups on the "Success for self" and "Success for others" questionnaires. Significant differences were found on a range of variables.

Results of "Success for self" - Hypotheses 1 and 2:

Hypothesis 1. There was strong support for this hypothesis with Anglo Australian and Immigrant groups significantly more likely to say that "Success for self" depended on seeking for excellence, task orientation, competitiveness, and power-seeking than the Aboriginal group. (See Table 1)

However the groups varied as a matter of degree rather than kind. On two dimensions, seeking for excellence and task orientation there was strong agreement across the three groups ($\underline{M} > 2.5$). On competition the Anglo and immigrant groups were relatively stronger in agreement than the Aboriginal group. All groups were unsure that obtaining power indicated being successful at school.

Hypothesis 2. There was no support for this hypothesis. The results indicate that there were no significant differences between the groups on affiliation, social concern or recognition. Anglo Australian and Immigrant groups were significantly more likely to see "Success for self" in terms of token reinforcement than were the Aboriginal group. This runs counter to the Hypothesis.

In essence, the three groups were equally likely to be unsure that the achievement of affiliation and social concern goals related to personal feelings of success at school. All three groups agreed that the achievement of token rewards and recognition were indications of personal success (see Table 2).

Table 1

Manova results showing significant differences on mean scores across the three groups for hypothesis 1

Variable	Aboriginal	Migrant	AngloAust	F	df	sig. MANOVA
Excellence	2.73[a]	2.86[b]	2.86[b]	19.4	2, 2049	.000
Task	2.55[a]	2.69[b]	2.69[b]	12.3	2, 2043	.000
Competition	2.09[a]	2.31[b]	2.27[b]	8.9	2,2056	.000
Power	1.86[a]	1.97[b]	1.96[b]	4.2	2, 2056	.020

Note: Mean scores with the same superscript are not significantly different from one another

The three point scale was anchored (1) Disagree (2) Unsure (3) Agree

Table 2

Manova results showing significant differences on mean scores across the three groups for hypothesis 2

Variable	Aboriginal	Migrant	AngloAust	F	df	sig. MANOVA
Affiliation	2.04	2.07	2.05	.135	2, 2045	.825
Social concern	2.06	2.05	2.11	1.7	2, 2055	.258
Teacher recognition	2.36	2.38	2.39	.221	2, 2049	.860
Token reinforcement	2.45[a]	2.68[b]	2.68[b]	29.7	2, 2049	.000

Note: Mean scores with the same superscript are not significantly different from one another

The three point scale was anchored (1) Disagree (2) Unsure (3) Agree

Results of "Success for others" - Hypotheses 3 and 4:

Hypothesis 3. There was strong support for this hypothesis with Anglo Australian and immigrant groups significantly more likely to say that "Success for others" depended on them being competitive, task oriented, self reliant, goal directed and seeking for excellence than the Aboriginal group. There was no significant difference on power seeking between the Aboriginal and immigrant groups. Both these groups saw power seeking as less important in others than did the Anglo Australian group. (See Table 3.)

However, again the groups varied as a matter of degree rather than kind. On all the Individualist goals, (competition, task, excellence, self reliance, and goal direction) except power, there was strong agreement ($\underline{M} > 2.5$) across the three groups that these were criteria of success for others.

Hypothesis 4. There was some support for this hypothesis with Anglo and immigrant students significantly less likely to say that "Success for others" depended on them being affiliation oriented, socially concerned, and having high self esteem than the

Aboriginal group. However, all three groups were unsure that affiliation and social concern were important to others' success. There was no significant difference between the three groups on token reinforcement with all three groups indicating that this was important to others ($\underline{M} > 2.5$). The Aboriginal group was significantly less likely to say the "Success for others" depended on them seeking for recognition than the other two groups. This runs counter to the hypothesis. (See Table 4.)

In summary, in all three groups perceptions of what made others successful at school vis a vis the achieving of individualist goals was the same across the groups and the same as for personal perceptions of success for self. However on two key collectivist goals (social concern and affiliation) and self-esteem the Anglo Australian and Migrant groups were significantly less likely to agree than the Aboriginal group.

Table 3

Manova results showing significant differences on mean scores across the three groups for hypothesis 3

Variable	Aboriginal	Migrant	AngloAust	F	df	sig. MANOVA
Excellence	2.59^a	2.71^b	2.71^b	6.7	2, 2056	.000
Task Orientation	2.68^a	2.76^b	2.77^b	6.2	2, 2055	.003
Competitiveness	2.4^a	2.5^b	2.49^b	3.4	2, 2055	.035
Power	1.84^a	1.84^a	1.94^b	5.3	2, 2055	.007
Self reliance	2.64^a	2.72^b	2.77^c	11.2	2, 2055	.000
Goal direction	2.61^a	2.79^b	2.82^b	33.2	2, 2055	.000

Note: Mean scores with the same superscript are not significantly different from one another

The three point scale was anchored (1) Disagree (2) Unsure (3) Agree

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Table 4

Manova results showing significant differences on mean scores across the three groups for hypothesis 4

Variable	Aboriginal	Migrant	AngloAust	F	df	sig. MANOVA
Affiliation	1.94[a]	1.83[b]	1.81[b]	5.7	2, 2054	.003
Social concern	2.13[a]	2.03[b]	2.02[b]	3.7	2, 2057	.031
Recognition	2.17[a]	2.35[b]	2.35[b]	10.0	2, 2054	.000
Token reinforcement	2.64	2.67	2.68	.663	2, 2057	.456
Self esteem	2.24[a]	2.07[b]	1.97[c]	23.1	2, 2054	.000

Note: Mean scores with the same superscript are not significantly different from one another

The three point scale was anchored (1) Disagree (2) Unsure (3) Agree

Results for Hypothesis 5.

There was no support for this hypothesis. There were a number of significant differences between "success for self" and "success for others" within each group and the pattern of differences was very similar across groups. (See Table 5.). For each of the three groups excellence and affiliation were perceived as significantly more important to **self** than to others while task and competition were perceived as significantly more important to **others** than to self. The Aboriginal group perceived token reinforcement as more important to others than themselves, and recognition as more important to themselves. The immigrant group thought power was more important for themselves than others. The Anglo group thought social concern was more important for themselves than others.

Table 5

Paired T-test results showing significant differences on mean scores (for self and others) within each group for hypothesis 5

Aboriginal Australian					
Variable	**Self**	**Other**	**t Value**	**df**	**2 Tail Prob.**
Excellence	2.7306[a]	2.5901	4.8	476	.000
Affiliation	2.0432[a]	1.9463	2.27	474	.024
Task	2.5446	2.6815[a]	-4.59	470	.000
Token	2.4494	2.6414[a]	-5.68	473	.000
Recognition	2.3600	2.1705	4.72	474	.000
Competition	2.0975	2.4057[a]	-7.08	476	.000
Social Concern	2.0635	2.1302	-1.81	479	.071
Power	1.8573	1.8240	.77	479	.439
Immigrant Australian					
Variable	**Self**	**Other**	**t Value**	**df**	**2 Tail Prob.**
Excellence	2.8568[a]	2.7158	5.27	474	.000
Affiliation	2.0677[a]	1.8393	5.14	472	.000
Task	2.6937	2.7663[a]	-2.49	474	.013
Token	2.6785	2.6681	.36	478	.722
Recognition	2.3852	2.3507	.84	478	.402
Competition	2.3102	2.5332[a]	-5.00	481	.000
Social Concern	2.0498	2.0332	.41	481	.681
Power	1.9678	1.8420	2.69	480	.007
Anglo Australian					
Variable	**Self**	**Other**	**t Value**	**df**	**2 Tail Prob.**
Excellence	2.8611a	2.7064	9.26	1162	.000
Affiliation	2.0465a	1.8124	7.85	1161	.000
Task	2.6907	2.7680[a]	-4.09	1163	.000
Token	2.6820	2.6790	.16	1164	.872
Recognition	2.3809	2.3534	1.01	1162	.311
Competition	2.2716	2.4927[a]	-7.92	1166	.000
Social Concern	2.1112[a]	2.0193	3.44	1164	.001
Power	1.9614	1.9399	.66	1164	.508

Note: Mean scores with superscript indicate the stronger response at a significant level
The three point scale was anchored (1) Disagree (2) Unsure (3) Agree
a: significantly different results showing direction of larger score

Chi square tests were also performed on all the variables in part 1 and part 2 of the survey. In almost all cases there was a significant chi square indicating a relationship between group and likelihood of an 'agree', 'unsure' or 'disagree' response. On most questions in part 1 (success for self) the Aboriginal group was less likely to agree and more likely to disagree or be unsure than either of the other two groups. The exceptions in part 1 were the two social concern questions and one power/group leadership question which indicated no relationship. These findings underline the possibility that although Aboriginal students' motivation at school is broadly oriented by the same goals as the non-Aboriginal groups, there is a discrepancy in the degree to which success measured by these goals is perceived by these students as measures of their personal success.

For most questions in part 2 (success for others) the significant chi squares indicated that the Aboriginal students were **less likely to agree** and more likely to be unsure or disagree with the propositions. The exceptions are interesting. Aboriginal students are **more likely to agree** and are less likely to disagree on the following questions: (success for others is when) "they don't try to be better than their friends" (affiliation), "they like to help others with their schoolwork" (social concern); "they get worried all the time about their schoolwork" and "they only do things that they are confident at" (self-esteem). these latter are qualities more often attributed to Aboriginal students than non-Aboriginal. In this instance the Aboriginal students are attributing them to their successful non-Aboriginal peers. There were non significant chi squares on the two token reinforcement questions, one competition question and one recognition question.

Discussion

Our focus in this research was to examine self and other perceptions of success in school contexts across three groups. Are they the same or different across these three different groups, and what does this tell us about Aboriginal children in our schools? Four things may be emphasised in summary. First, in relation to the stereotypical dimensions indicating personal success from a Western perspective (i.e., achieving

goals that are individualistic) the Western groups are significantly stronger, which supports Hypothesis 1. However, these significant differences are a matter of degree rather than kind. The Aboriginal respondents also indicate that these dimensions are personally relevant as criteria for success within the school context. In other words the Aboriginal students do not appear to see themselves differently from students in general. However, if these criteria are relevant to indicating personal success for Aboriginal children, then the significantly lower level of agreement of these students with these dimensions is cause for concern. It could reflect the comparative lack of success many Aboriginal children have in meeting these achievement goals. We need to consider the implications of this for these students, and perhaps bolster Aboriginal performance by enhancing the salience of these goals.

Second,in relation to the collectivist dimensions indicating personal success there are, in general, no significant differences. Hence the hypothesised dichotomy between the values held by Western groups and the Aboriginal group is not supported in these educational contexts. All three groups indicated that they were unsure of the importance of these dimensions to feeling personally successful at school.

Third, in relation to perceptions of others (Hypotheses 3 and 4) the hypotheses are, in general, upheld. In particular the Aboriginal findings are intriguing and paradoxical. While the Aboriginal students consider collectivist goals important to others, they consider them less important than individual goals as a measure of achieving their own success. The question could be asked "what does this mean in terms of Aboriginal children projecting an image of what the successful student is like?" On the one hand Aboriginal children may recognise the "reality" of the qualities required of them individually to be successful at school. On the other hand, Aboriginal students may be indicating an acknowledgment of residual cultural/social norms derived from their Aboriginal culture by saying that other students should be more affilliative and socially concerned to be personally successful. This may indicate that these students have progressively become acculturated into Western school values

Fourth, , seeking for excellence (intrinsic motivation) and affiliation (hypothesis five) were perceived as more important to self than others within each group, while task goals and competition were perceived as more important to others than to self, within each group. This seems to suggest that a personal view of self within the school

context includes qualities that are socially desirable (seeking for excellence and affiliation), rather than qualities that appear self-aggrandising, such as competitiveness. This may suggest recognition by students from all three groups of the emphasis schools typically place on performance oriented goals (such as competition) at the expense of affiliative goals. If so, is there may be an implication that curricula which emphasise task and affiliative goals are more likely to result in a personally satisfying and academic enriching experience for students from widely differing cultural groups.

Conclusion

We interpret the data from this study as evidence that the participants' perceptions of success for self at school across the three groups is remarkably the same. All groups agreed strongly that excellence and task involvement were important personal indicators of being successful, although the Western groups were significantly more inclined to say these were the qualities that made them feel personally successful at school. The two Western groups were significantly more likely than the Aboriginal group to agree that being competitively successful at school is an indicator of personal success. The Aboriginal group was unsure of the value of competition. All three groups were unsure of the importance of achieving power as an indicator of success, although again the Aboriginal group was more negative (Table 1). This difference in perception of the salient characteristics for personal success across the groups is further supported by the findings that the Western groups also agree more strongly that excellence, task orientation, and competitiveness are characteristics of successful students in general. This result could illustrate the advantage the Western groups have in school settings which emphasise the achievement of these individualist goals as a measure of school success.

In contrast there are no significant differences in the profiles of the groups on the collectivist goals of affiliation and social concern (Table 2). All three groups were unsure of the relationship of achievement of these goals to their feelings of success at school. All three groups agreed that teacher recognition was important to their feeling successful at school, and there were no significant differences. Finally, all three groups

strongly agreed that receiving token reinforcement indicates that they are successful, with the two Western groups significantly more positive than the Aboriginal group.

We believe that these findings support literature which suggests that schools foster individualist goals but do not foster collectivist goals. One possible implication of the finding that students are unsure of the salience of the collectivist goals to feeling successful is that schools could be redesigned so that these goals, along with mastery goals, are emphasised as sources of success at school to the benefit of all children.

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